

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 SSM-03
IO-13 COME-00 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 HA-05 ICAE-00 SSO-00
INRE-00 NSCE-00 /093 W
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O R 031108Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7415
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
COMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1831

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, ASEC, LE
SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION, APRIL 3, 1200 LOCAL

REF: BEIRUT 1802 (DTG 010920Z APR 78)

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. THERE HAVE BEEN NO NEW MAJOR INCIDENTS
REPORTED IN SOUTH LEBANON. FORTY-FIVE NORWEGIAN
OFFICERS AND MEN ARRIVED BY PLANE IN BEIRUT ON
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APRIL1. PRESIDENT SARKIS WROTE A LETTER THANKING
FRANCE FOR HER PARTICIPATION IN UNIFIL. KAMAL AL
ASSAD CALLED ON SECRETARY GENERAL WALDHEIM TO INCREASE
THE STRENGTH OF UNIFIL. RASHID KARAMI CRITICIZED UNIFIL.

CAMILLE CHAMOUN CALLED FOR A LARGER ROLE FOR THE
LEBANESE ARMY. WADI' HADDAD DIED. END SUMMARY

2. MILITARY SITUATION.

A. THERE WERE NO NEW MAJOR INCIDENTS REPORTED IN SOUTH LEBANON ON APRIL 1 AND 2, AND Wafa's English language bulletin carried no reports of military activity on those days. In an interview with ABC in Beirut on April 1, Arafat repeated his promise to cooperate with UNIFIL "to supervise Israel's withdrawal," but declined to promise to heed a ceasefire.

B. DURING THE AFTERNOON AND EVENING OF APRIL 1 AND 2, THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE SMALL ARMS FIRE IN EAST AND WEST BEIRUT. THE FORMER WAS APPARENTLY IN HONOR OF A CHRISTIAN HOLIDAY, WHILE THE LATTER MARKED THE DEATH OF Waddi' Haddad (see below), Syrians increased their alert posture, but there were apparently no armed conflicts, although there was automatic weapons firing in the Basta area this morning.

3. UNIFIL ACTIVITIES.

A. FORTY-FIVE NORWEGIAN OFFICERS AND MEN ARRIVED BY PLANE IN BEIRUT ON APRIL 1. (THERE WERE ALREADY 59 NORWEGIANS IN COUNTRY.) THE BULK OF THE NORWEGIAN CONTINGENT IS SCHEDULED TO LAND IN TEL AVIV. THEY WILL BE DEPLOYED IN THE MARJAYUN AREA.

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B. ALL BEIRUT NEWSPAPERS ON APRIL 2, QUOTED UNIFIL COMMANDER ERSKINE AS TELLING ISRAEL RADIO THAT HIS TROOPS "HAVE THEIR INSTRUCTIONS; THE SOLDIERS ARE NOT GOING TO REMAIN IN THEIR POSITIONS WHEN FIRED UPON AND LAUGH - THEY WILL FIRE BACK." HE ALSO SAID IT WAS UNCLEAR WHETHER UNIFIL'S MANDATE GAVE IT THE RIGHT TO ESTABLISH POSITIONS IN AREAS NOT TAKEN BY ISRAELI FORCES. "I'M JUST WAITING FOR INSTRUCTIONS," HE SAID.

4. SARKIS' LETTER TO GISCARD.

IN A LETTER TO GISCARD D'ESTAING, RELEASED BY THE ELYSEE PALACE, PRESIDENT SARKIS SAID FRANCE'S PARTICIPATION IN UNIFIL HAD "SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE" AND "ILLUSTRATED THE INTEREST WHICH YOUR COUNTRY ACCORDS TO EVERYTHING WHICH EFFECTS LEBANON AND THE EVER-LASTINGNESS OF THE SECULAR FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES." SARKIS ALSO SAID THAT "FRANCE'S SUPPORT CONSTITUTES FOR US A REASON FOR COMFORT AND HOPE AND WILL MAKE EASIER THE TASK OF PACIFICATION, RECONSTRUCTION AND UNIFICATION." SARKIS' LETTER WAS IN REPLY TO A MARCH 23 LETTER FROM GISCARD, WHO HAD EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT FRENCH PARTICIPATION IN UNIFIL WOULD DEMONSTRATE FRANCE'S FIRENDSHIP FOR THE LEBANESE PEOPLE.

5. ASSAD'S MESSAGE TO WALDHEIM.

IN A MESSAGE SENT TO SECRETARY GENERAL WALDHEIM ON APRIL 2, SPEAKER KAMAL AL ASSAD SAID THAT UNIFIL SHOULD BECOME A "STRIKE FORCE" HAVING THE "CHARACTER OF DISSUASION," AND THAT UNIFIL'S STRENGTH SHOULD CONSEQUENTLY BE INCREASED. ON ANOTHER MATTER, ASSAD SAID ON APRIL 1 THAT THE PROPOSED PARLIAMENTARY MEETING ON THE QUESTION OF THE PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN LEBANON WOULD BE SCHEDULED SOON.

6. STATEMENT ON UNIFIL.

FORMER PRIME MINISTER RASHID KARAMI TOLD THE PRESS ON APRIL 2 THAT THE PRESENCE OF UNIFIL AS WELL AS THAT OF THE ISRAELIS "IS CONFIDENTIAL

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REASONFXGQCQ&4X IN A SIMILAR VEIN, L'ORIENT LE-JOUR ON APRIL 3 QUOTED FATAH OFFICIAL SALAH KHALAF AS SAYING THAT "FRANCE IS SEEKING TO PLAY A NEW COLONIAL ROLE IN LEBANON WITH UNIFIL." (AL MURABITUN AND LEBANESE COMMUNISTS HAVE ALSO CRITICIZED THE ROLES OF FRANCE AND IRAN IN UNIFIL.)

7. CHAMOUN ON THE ARMY.

AFTER MEETING WITH PRESIDENT SARKIS AND FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS ON APRIL 1, NLP LEADER CAMILLE CHAMOUN TOLD REPORTERS THAT "THE TIME HAD COME FOR THE LEBANESE ARMY TO PLAY ITS ROLE AT THE BORDER AND INSIDE LEBANON." CHAMOUN ADDED THAT "OF COURSE THE ARMY MUST FIRST BE EXPANDED AND PROVIDED WITH HEAVY EQUIPMENT TO ENABLE IT TO PROTECT THE COUNTRY AND MAINTAIN ORDER."

8. WADDI' HADDAD DEAD.

WADDI' HADDAD, CO-FOUNDER WITH GEORGE HABASH OF THE POPULAR FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE (PFLP), DIED IN EAST GERMANY ON MARCH 28, APPARENTLY OF CANCER. HIS BODY WAS FLOWN TO BAGHDAD AND THERE WILL BE "A MARTYR'S CEREMONY WITH FULL MILITARY HONORS" IN BEIRUT, ACCORDING TO A PFLP SPOKESMAN (SEPTTEL).
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